BENGALURU, MONDAY, MAY 18, 2026 www.Bangaloremirror.com 12 Pages PRICE ₹3

# Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 34 | Min 23 | Humidity 57% Light rain Sensex 75,237 | Nifty 23,643 | Gold 1,58,565 | Silver 2,69,818 | Dollar 95.93 | Euro 111.60 | GBP 127.80

## NOT NEET AT ALL

Issues surrounding gateway to medical education for lakhs of students come to the fore as it faces its biggest credibility crisis yet

PAGE 6

## SEE YOU AT THE PLAYOFFS

Royal Challengers Bengaluru hold their nerve to edge out Punjab Kings and become first team to secure IPL playoffs berth

PAGE 7

**Fuel price hike is just one of the issues that gig workers have to bear the brunt of in their work life — prolonged shifts in bad traffic and broken roads, sustained pressure to meet targets are slowly chipping away at their mental and physical health**

# THE GIG BANG THEORY

### Workers ignore initial signs as they gradually begin to normalise exhaustion and stress

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KAUSHIK JN

Even as gig workers struck work on Saturday, the past few months have been excruciating for delivery partners working prolonged shifts under bad traffic, harsh weather conditions and algorithm-driven pressure.

According to delivery partner Asha, "Since we are not employees, there is no security whatsoever. We are in constant stress of getting blocked over trivial issues. Riding the whole day has burnt my skin and I feel tired and weak all the time," she said.

Some delivery partners BM spoke to told us that if they get a cash-on-delivery order, they have to go to and fro after they hit the limit of Rs 2,000 in cash, which they have to submit to the respective stores, causing them more physical and mental exhaustion. At times delivery platforms also deduct money, after a tax cut, making it difficult for many gig workers to sustain themselves.

Another partner Devraju said, "Many times we have to wait for customers to collect orders, and if there is any issue, we have nowhere to go for grievance redressal. After 3–4 deliveries, I earn around Rs 500, and half of this goes for petrol. I am the sole earner of my family, but delivery jobs offer no security and treat us like slaves," he said.

As per medical experts, working 10 to 14 hour shifts daily can make an individual vulnerable to psychological and physical health problems, many of which go untreated as they are often ignored because it directly affects their income.

Spending long hours navigating Bengaluru traffic, riding in poor road conditions and working under unrealistic delivery deadlines are contributing to chronic pain, sleep deprivation, spinal strain, dehydration, acidity and mental exhaustion amongst gig workers, a doctor said.

**"Delivery workers today are constantly monitored through ratings, deadlines, penalties and tracking systems. This can create a feeling of being under watch all the time, which increases stress levels continuously**

—Dr Vikram Arunachalam, Senior Psychiatrist, District Mental Health Programme

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 >>

# Wait for rain

### As KRS reservoir water level falls below 89 feet, all eyes peeled on monsoon clouds

**As the water level in the KRS reservoir has dropped to 88 feet, the submerged Sri Lakshminarayanaswamy Temple has reappeared in the backwaters. The temple's gopuram and the 12-pillared mantapa are now fully visible. This is the fifth time in the past decade that the temple has emerged — previously in 2019, 2021, 2023, and 2024, and now again in 2026.**

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The Krishna Raja Sagar (KRS) reservoir, the lifeline of southern Karnataka, is staring at a worrying summer as water levels have dropped below 89 feet amid weak pre-monsoon rainfall, triggering fears over drinking water supply and irrigation for the upcoming monsoon crop season.

The reservoir level on Saturday stood at 88.61 feet against its maximum capacity of 124.80 feet, exposing vast stretches of the dried-backwater region and even bringing the long-submerged Lakshmi Narayanaswamy temple back into full view.

The falling water level in the KRS reservoir, a key source for Bengaluru, Mysuru and several other cities, has become a major concern. However, the Water Resources Department has assured that there will be no shortage of drinking water supply till June. Officials said evaporation losses and higher water release are contributing to the rapid depletion, prompting the government to prioritise drinking water needs. They expect the situation to improve if the monsoon arrives in the first week of June,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 >>

## THINGS TO DO

### 01 Craft collaboration

Dastkar Bazaar presents its 25th edition with 160+ craft groups bringing authentic handcrafted merchandise across textiles, pottery, jewellery and wellness products, while also supporting artisans affected by the recent Delhi fire.
**Where: Jayamahal Palace Hotel;**
**When: May 29 to June 4, 10.30 am to 8 pm**

### 02 Creative outlet

Atta Galatta is hosting an art journalling workshop, a guided, beginner-friendly session where participants can draw, collage, layer and create a journal page that's entirely theirs.
**Where: Atta Galatta, Indiranagar;**
**When: May 23, 1 pm**

### 03 Treble makers

Rudraksha Live Entertainment Pvt Ltd presents Jazbaa, a concert featuring Vishal and Rekha Bhardwaj — a powerhouse duo in Indian music and cinema, known for their deeply moving collaborations and individual brilliance.
**Where: Phoenix Marketcity;**
**When: May 30, 7 pm**

### 04 Whimsical world

Magical World, an exhibition featuring a vibrant collection of artworks by Badrunissa Irfan, brings alive the magic of childhood and the warmth of simple moments through playful, hand-painted characters and scenes.
**Where: Sublime Gallery, UB City;**
**When: Until May 30**

### 05 Cartoon carnival

The Oterra Hotel is hosting a Kids Carnival Brunch, bringing a vibrant world of cartoon legends and superhero adventures. While parents enjoy a premium spread, children can dive into interactive games, live performances and more.
**Where: The Oterra Hotel, 24@43, Electronic City;**
**When: Every Sunday until May 31**

# Tahsildars must enter names of buyers in revenue records

## HC warns against needless petitions and demands accountability from revenue officers for timely updation of property records to reflect changes accurately

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Karnataka Sakala Services Act aims to ensure timely delivery of citizen services by government departments

The High Court has directed the Tahsildar of Bengaluru North Taluk to enter the names of the petitioners in the revenue records pursuant to the registered sale deed. It also directed the Tahsildar to complete the entire process as expeditiously as possible and, at any rate, within a period of six weeks.

The High Court, while hearing a writ petition filed by Annapurneshwari Builders and Developers and others, observed that it is being flooded with such writ petitions seeking a writ of mandamus directing Tahsildars to enter the names of purchasers in the revenue records. "These are surely unnecessary litigations which are brought before this court. If the Tahsildars do their duty in terms of the law and the directions issued by this court, there is no need for the purchasers who have acquired title to come before this court seeking directions to the Tahsildars," the High Court remarked verbally.

The court stated that the State Legislature enacted the Karnataka Sakala Services Act, 2011, to provide guaranteed services to citizens within a stipulated time limit. "Section 3 of the Karnataka Sakala Services Act, 2011, provides that every citizen shall have the right to obtain citizen-related services in the state in accordance with the provisions of the Act within the stipulated time specified in the schedule. As per the Act, every designated officer and subordinate public servant of the public authority is saddled with a duty to provide such citizen-related services within the stipulated time specified in the schedule and also display the same on the notice boards of their offices," the court order reads.

### Homebuyers welcome ruling as court directs Tahsildars to complete citizen-related services in time-bound manner, warning officials of penalties for delays under Sakala Act provisions

The court observed that it was also surprising that competent officers under the Act had failed to comply with its provisions by not monitoring applications, not providing information on notice boards and not taking action against Tahsildars for failing to provide services within the time stipulated under the Act.

"Attention of the Principal Secretary, Revenue Department is also drawn to this order so that the Tahsildars shall be sensitised in this regard. Prompt action on the part of the Tahsildar will reduce the number of such writ petitions being filed before this court. This court also proposes to henceforth pass orders in such cases where there is gross violation of the provisions of the Act, 2011, to impose costs on the respondent-State, in terms of the provisions of the said Act, 2011," the order copy reads.

Meanwhile, homebuyers welcomed the High Court order directing Tahsildars to enter the names of buyers under registered sale deeds. "The Government of Karnataka is trying to confuse property owners in the name of A-Khata and B-Khata which do not exist in law. It is just khata, which means a record of ownership. Once a sale deed is registered in a Sub-Registrar Office, property ownership gets transferred to the buyer from the seller and it is the responsibility of the government to update the revenue records about the ownership change," said Karnataka Home Buyers' Forum Sanchalak Dhananjaya Padmanabhachar.

Expressing a similar opinion, property owner Yatish M said the High Court had rightly observed that such litigation was unnecessary and mainly arose due to administrative inaction by revenue authorities. "The judgment sends a strong message that public offices must function within the stipulated time prescribed by law and citizens should not suffer harassment or delay for routine services like khata transfer and mutation entries," he said.

# Dengue Day celebrated with awareness drive

On the occasion of National Dengue Day, the Krishnarajapuram Urban Primary Health Centre, under the Bengaluru East City Corporation, conducted a dengue awareness programme at the BMTC Central Workshop-02 in Dooravani Nagar on Saturday.

Health officials educated workers about dengue symptoms, treatment, preventive measures and the importance of public cooperation in controlling mosquito breeding.

As part of the programme, an intensive larval survey was carried out across the workshop premises, including inspections of water drums, tyres, buckets and solid waste materials. Health officials also sprayed ABATE larvicidal solution in areas where mosquito larvae were detected. Officials said community participation and maintaining cleanliness are key to preventing dengue and other mosquito-borne diseases. **–BMB**

# Voter list changes to be permitted until June 20

Voters will be able to apply for inclusion, deletion and correction of names in the electoral rolls until June 20 before the Election Commission begins the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process across the state. The State Election Department said applications can continue to be submitted both online and physically at designated offices until the revision process officially begins. Preparatory work, training and printing activities will take place between June 20 and June 29. Following this, Booth Level Officers (BLOs) will conduct door-to-door verification from June 30 to July 29. The draft voter list is scheduled to be published on August 5, while objections and claims can be filed till September 4. The final electoral roll will be released on October 7. Officials said various forms will remain available for voter-related services, including Form 6 for fresh voter registration, Form 6A for overseas Indian voters, Form 7 for objections or deletion of names and Form 8 for address changes, corrections and replacement voter ID cards. However, fresh application submissions will be temporarily suspended from June 20 until October 1 due to the revision exercise. **–BMB**

# State anthem made mandatory in all schools

The School Education Department has made it compulsory for all government, aided and private primary and secondary schools across the state to sing the state anthem during morning prayers every day starting from the new academic year. In a fresh circular, the department directed schools to ensure the anthem is sung in a disciplined and rhythmic manner. Kannada teachers must also explain its meaning and significance to students. Schools have been instructed to provide proper training through music teachers so that students learn to sing it correctly.

The circular also mandates singing the anthem during Independence Day, Republic Day, Kannada Rajyotsava and annual school celebrations. Authorities warned that action could be taken against heads of institutions that fail to implement the directive. **–BMB**

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# Flood fury erupts as silt chokes Indiranagar drains

## After spell of rain 2 weeks ago, water entered cellars of buildings making it clear that silt and plastic had not been removed from roadside drains in area

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All City Corporations have claimed that they have taken measures to remove silt from all drains, including roadside drains, to avoid flooding during the monsoon. However, the Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) authorities are yet to pull up their socks to ensure there is no flooding on 100 Feet Road, Indiranagar.

Several residents on 100 Feet Road had a terrible experience when it rained heavily on April 29. They were shocked to see water overflowing from the roadside drain into their cellars. They tried to prevent water from entering the cellars by placing sandbags along the drain in front of their buildings, but in vain.

Residents complained that the authorities had failed to remove silt and debris from the roadside drain. "We faced a lot of problems on April 29. Our cellar looked like a swimming pool. We were worried about the safety of electrical equipment. We have informed the authorities concerned to fix this problem. We want them to ensure the roadside drain is free of silt and plastic," said Pradeep Chipre, a resident.

Water from clogged roadside drains flooded cellars on Indiranagar's 100 Feet Road after heavy rain

**Overflowing stormwater entered basements during heavy rainfall, while locals blamed blocked channels, garbage accumulation and cables for worsening rain chaos**

Another resident, requesting anonymity, said the drain was blocked by electrical cables and choked with plastic and garbage. "I want the authorities to keep the drain clean and ensure the free flow of rainwater without any hindrances," the resident said.

Demanding that the authorities fix the problem permanently, Arshad Rizwan, a property manager, suggested that BCCC engineers take up desilting of the entire drain on 100 Feet Road. "What is the use of removing silt or plastic from only a portion of the drain? The authorities have to undertake desilting of the entire stretch of the drain and also ensure there are no electrical or other cables inside it. We also faced a lot of problems when our cellar was flooded with rainwater on April 29," he said.

Coming down heavily on the BCCC authorities for not taking measures to remove silt from the drain, Nagaraj N, a resident, said the authorities had to complete the work well before the onset of the monsoon to avoid inconvenience not only to residents but also to motorists. "The road looks like a waterlogged pool whenever it rains heavily. If the roadside drain is free of silt and garbage, there will be no waterlogging or flooding on this road, which was white-topped a few years ago at an estimated cost of Rs 28 crore," he said.

Meanwhile, the BCCC (CV Raman Nagar) Executive Engineer said measures would be taken shortly to desilt the drain. "I will take up the work as early as possible," the executive engineer said.

# Petition seeks CSR recognition for animal welfare

### Petition urges government to unlock unused corporate funds for decentralised animal care initiatives tackling rabies risks, stray populations and safety

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An online petition is calling on the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) to formally include animal welfare as a recognised category under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) spending in India. The appeal argues that large amounts of CSR funds remain unspent each year or are used for short-term projects, while stray animal management and public safety concerns continue to grow in many cities and towns.

The campaign highlights that animal welfare is not just an ethical concern, but also a public health and safety issue. It points to the large population of stray dogs across India and the continued risk of rabies transmission. Advocates say better use of CSR funds could help address these challenges through structured local programmes.

The petition was started after a recent amendment by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, which allowed CSR spending on animal welfare under ecological and sustainable development activities. Campaigners say this shows that policy change is possible through a simple update in CSR guidelines and could be expanded across all sectors.

At the centre of the proposal is the idea of decentralised animal welfare projects. These include Animal Birth Control (ABC) sterilisation programmes, anti-rabies vaccination drives, local animal shelters, rescue services and awareness campaigns in communities. Supporters argue that such projects are easier to implement at the local level and can deliver faster and more visible results compared to large infrastructure-based CSR projects.

The petition, initiated by CJ Memorial Trust, also highlights public health data suggesting that India accounts for a significant share of global rabies deaths. It points out that improving vaccination coverage and controlling stray populations can directly reduce dog-bite incidents and save lives. Campaigners also refer to successful examples such as the Jaipur model, where coordinated sterilisation and vaccination programmes have reportedly helped reduce human-animal conflict over time.

Campaigners call for structured CSR funding for stray animal management

According to the petition, CSR funds could play a major role in scaling such initiatives if the rules are made clearer and easier for companies to use. It recommends that the MCA amend Schedule VII of the Companies Act to explicitly include animal welfare and rescue activities. It also suggests that a fixed share of environmental CSR funds from public sector undertakings be directed towards local animal welfare programmes.

Another key recommendation is the creation of a simplified approval or "green channel" system that would allow companies to directly partner with recognised animal welfare organisations, shelters and veterinary clinics without long administrative delays.

The petition also points out that animal welfare projects can improve corporate-community relationships. Campaigners argue that companies investing in visible local initiatives such as vaccination drives or shelter support often gain stronger public trust and employee engagement.

A member of CJ Memorial Trust said animal welfare is closely linked to community wellbeing and that directing CSR funds towards decentralised animal care can improve public health, safety and coexistence. The campaign also highlights the "One Health" approach, linking human, animal and environmental health through better vaccination and population management.

**Campaigners seek CSR policy reforms enabling companies to support sterilisation drives, shelters and vaccinations, promoting healthier neighbourhoods alongside stronger community engagement**

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### Road obstruction
**Bannerghatta**

A large stone obstructing the service road near Decathlon on Bannerghatta Main Road needs to be removed promptly to ensure traffic safety.

### Footpath encroachment
**Kammanahalli**

Encroachment by newly opened shops opposite Hotel Sukh Sagar on Kammanahalli Main Road has eliminated footpath access, causing severe inconvenience to pedestrians despite repeated complaints to the authorities being ignored.

### Toxic waste
**Shampura**

An uncollected pile of garbage at 3A, 1st Main Road near Ambedkar College, MM Layout, Shampura is being burnt periodically, causing toxic fumes, health hazards and pest infestation, requiring urgent waste clearance and monitoring.

# Court ends education funds freeze

The Karnataka High Court has held that a bank cannot assume the role of an adjudicating authority while dealing with disputes involving account holders and educational institutions, and cannot freeze an educational society's bank account merely on the basis of rival claims.

Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum passed the order while allowing a petition filed by an educational society whose account had been frozen by a bank following disputes raised by certain individuals over the management and administration of the institution.

The court observed that the bank had acted beyond its authority by unilaterally freezing the account without any adjudication by a competent forum. It stressed that financial institutions are expected to act in accordance with the law and cannot decide disputed questions relating to ownership, management, or internal administration of societies and institutions.

**Court says educational institutions cannot suffer due to rival administrative claims**

The bench noted that disputes concerning control and management of an educational society must be resolved before appropriate judicial or statutory authorities. Until such adjudication takes place, a bank cannot paralyse the functioning of an institution by freezing its account.

The court further observed that educational institutions deal with activities in the public interest, such as the payment of staff salaries, student welfare, and administrative expenses, and that the arbitrary freezing of accounts could severely disrupt their functioning.

Holding the bank's action to be unsustainable, the High Court directed the defreezing of the account and said that banks must remain neutral in cases involving internal disputes unless there is a specific direction from a competent court or authority. —BMB

# Travel curbs face judicial scrutiny

IN HIGH COURT

The Karnataka High Court has stayed the operation of a Look-Out Circular (LOC) issued against a man embroiled in a matrimonial dispute, observing that preventing him from travelling abroad for employment was a disproportionate restriction on his fundamental rights.

Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum, in an order dated April 30, held that executive actions such as LOCs cannot be allowed to virtually cause the "civil death" of a person by depriving them of their livelihood. The court stressed that the right to travel abroad forms part of the right to personal liberty guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.

The case involved an estranged couple married in 2011. The husband had been employed in Qatar even before the marriage. Following marital discord, the wife filed a criminal complaint in 2022 at the Udupi Mahila Police Station under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code and related provisions. Based on the complaint, the police issued an LOC against the husband, leading to his detention at an airport when he arrived in India that year.

Challenging the LOC before the High Court, the husband argued that the restriction effectively prevented him from returning to his overseas job and threatened his livelihood.

While acknowledging the seriousness of the allegations, the court observed that the dispute fundamentally arose out of matrimonial discord and should not result in excessive restraints on individual freedoms. The bench noted that merely because a criminal case is pending does not automatically justify a blanket prohibition on foreign travel.

The court further observed that restrictions affecting overseas employment must satisfy the constitutional test of proportionality. It also recorded that the petitioner had not attempted to evade legal proceedings or abscond from trial.

**Judges rule overseas employment cannot be blocked amid matrimonial criminal proceedings**

Warning against the misuse of criminal proceedings in matrimonial conflicts, the court said criminal law should not become a tool for "economic strangulation". It concluded that continuing the LOC without creating any mechanism for the petitioner to pursue his employment abroad warranted judicial interference.

Accordingly, the High Court directed the authorities to permit the man to travel abroad for work, subject to conditions. The petitioner was asked to furnish an undertaking detailing his employment location and assuring the court of his participation in future hearings. —BMB

# Viral video triggers KSRTC probe

After a video of a man arguing with the anti-tobacco squad of the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation at Kempegowda Bus Station went viral, officials said they would inquire into the incident.

Bharath Yadav had bought a cigarette from a condiment store at the Kempegowda Bus Station and lit it. Three members of the anti-tobacco squad appeared at the scene and demanded that Yadav pay a fine of Rs 200 for smoking in a public place. They were allegedly seen asking the accused to pay the money to the shop owner instead of collecting it themselves and issuing a receipt. Yadav said he was willing to pay the penalty if he was given a receipt. "I was ready to pay the money to the KSRTC account. I refused to comply when they told me to pay Rs 200 to the shop owner. I asked the anti-tobacco squad members about the connection between them and the shop owner," Yadav said.

He said that he had come from Chitradurga to attend an interview on Saturday and was about to board a bus to return to his hometown when the anti-tobacco squad accosted him.

KRS activist Nirupadi K Gomarsi urged KSRTC to investigate the incident, act against those responsible, and ban tobacco sales at Kempegowda Bus Station. The KSRTC Divisional Controller said he had received the video and would conduct an inquiry on Monday before taking action.

—Y Maheswara Reddy


Advertorial

## Freedom Bengaluru Half Marathon 2026

# Run Beyond Limits!

Bengaluru's running community is gearing up for one of the city's most exciting fitness celebrations as the Freedom Bengaluru Half Marathon 2026, presented by Freedom Healthy Cooking Oil, returns on 24th May 2026 with over 6000+ participants and counting!

Set against the iconic NICE Road stretch, the event promises a world-class running experience for athletes, fitness enthusiasts, and first-time runners alike. Participants can choose from professionally timed race categories including 21.1K Half Marathon, 10K, and 5K runs.

Organised by Kalki Sports, FBHM 2026 aims to bring together the spirit of fitness, endurance, and community while delivering a premium race-day experience. Runners will receive exciting race-day goodies, a high-quality dry-fit T-shirt, timed BIB, finisher's medal, hydration support, medical assistance, and post-run refreshments.

The event will also feature the FBHM **Expo 2026 on 22nd & 23rd May** at White Petals, Vijayanagar, where participants can collect their race BIBs and explore partner activations, fitness brands, merchandise stalls, and interactive experiences.

■ **Expo Venue:**
White Petals - 25, 22nd Main Rd, Govindaraja Nagar Ward, Basaveshwara HBCS Layout, Vijayanagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560040

■ **Expo Timings:**
**11:00 AM to 6:00 PM**

■ **Expo Date: 22nd & 23rd May, 2026**

With enthusiastic participation from corporates, running groups, and fitness communi ties across the country, Freedom Bengaluru Half Marathon 2026 is rapidly becoming one of Bengaluru's marquee running properties.

☛ **Race Day Venue: NICE Tollgate, Hosakerehalli**
☛ **Event Date: 24th May 2026**
☛ **Categories: 21.1K | 10K | 5K**
☛ **6000+ Participants & Counting**

**Freedom Bengaluru Half Marathon 2026 — Run Beyond Limits!**

BM SIMPLY PUT

## Understanding why NEET has sparked nationwide debates over fairness, accessibility and integrity

# Why is NEET not so neat?

India's National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), the gateway to medical education for lakhs of students, is facing its biggest credibility crisis yet. For the first time since its introduction in 2013, the exam has been cancelled due to a question paper leak, with the National Testing Agency (NTA) announcing a re-examination. The controversy has reignited long-standing concerns over centralisation, coaching centre influence, exam security and alleged inequality in medical admissions. Here is a detailed explainer on how NEET evolved into one of India's most controversial examinations.

### What is NEET and when did it begin?

National Eligibility cum Entrance Test, commonly known as NEET, was introduced in 2013 as a single national entrance examination for admission to undergraduate and postgraduate medical courses across India. It replaced the earlier All India Pre-Medical Test (AIPMT) system and several state-level entrance examinations. Before NEET, states conducted their own medical entrance tests.

### Why was NEET introduced?

The primary objective behind NEET was to create a uniform and centralised medical admission system across India. Policymakers argued that a single examination would reduce multiple tests, simplify admissions and maintain common academic standards nationwide. However, from the beginning, several states and private institutions opposed the move, arguing that education and admissions were state subjects and that a centralised examination ignored regional and social realities.

### Who conducts NEET?

Initially, NEET was conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), which had been conducting medical entrance examinations since the 1980s. In 2019, the Union government transferred the responsibility to the newly created National Testing Agency (NTA), a specialised body set up to conduct national entrance examinations. Critics alleged that this gave the Centre indirect control over medical admissions and further centralised the system.

### Why has NEET remained controversial?

Over the years, NEET has faced repeated criticism over question paper leaks, exam malpractice, growing dependence on expensive coaching centres and the disadvantages faced by rural and government school students due to language and syllabus disparities across states. Critics and several studies have argued that the system increasingly favours urban, affluent and socially privileged students who can afford high-end coaching, leading to unequal access to medical education.

### How did coaching centres become so powerful?

After NEET became mandatory nationwide, coaching institutes expanded rapidly across India. Over time, success in NEET became closely associated with intensive coaching rather than regular schooling.

### What happened in the 2024 NEET controversy?

In 2024, as many as 67 candidates scored full marks, triggering allegations of manipulation, unfair evaluation and question paper leaks. Eventually, the NTA conducted a retest for 1,563 candidates who had received grace marks.

### Has NEET faced paper leak allegations before?

Yes. NEET and earlier medical entrance examinations have repeatedly faced allegations of paper leaks and impersonation. One of the biggest controversies occurred in 2015 under the AIPMT system, when Bluetooth devices were found to be used to transmit answers to candidates. The Supreme Court cancelled the examination and ordered a retest.

### Why is the current cancellation significant?

This is the first time NEET itself has been cancelled due to a paper leak and a nationwide re-examination has been announced. Critics say the move exposes serious loopholes in India's centralised testing system.

### Why has Tamil Nadu strongly opposed NEET?

Tamil Nadu has consistently opposed NEET, arguing that it harms rural and government school students. The issue became emotionally charged in 2017 after 17-year-old aspirant S Anitha died by suicide after scoring poorly in NEET despite performing well academically.

### What is Karnataka's stand on NEET?

The Karnataka government has also expressed strong reservations about the examination system. Karnataka had earlier developed the CET model for admissions into professional courses, which many considered more balanced and accessible. Following the latest cancellation, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah renewed the demand to abolish NEET, arguing that the system disadvantages poor and rural students.

### Why is NEET compared to China's Gaokao?

NEET is often compared with China's highly competitive Gaokao examination because of the enormous pressure associated with it. Both exams are considered among the world's toughest academic entrance tests. However, experts argue that while China treats exam security and management with extreme seriousness, repeated controversies in India have raised concerns about whether the country's testing systems are adequately prepared to handle examinations of such massive scale and importance.

### When will NEET-UG be conducted completely online?

The National Testing Agency (NTA) has announced that NEET-UG will shift entirely to a Computer-Based Test (CBT) format from the 2027 academic session onwards. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said the move is aimed at eliminating vulnerabilities linked to physical question paper printing, transportation and distribution.

### When is the NEET-UG 2026 retest scheduled?

The NEET-UG 2026 retest will be conducted on June 21, 2026 (Sunday). According to the official notification issued by the National Testing Agency (NTA), the examination will be held from 2 pm to 5.15 pm (IST) in offline pen-and-paper mode.

## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

### Humanity first

In a rare gesture, Pandavapura Sub-Divisional Officer KR Srinivas visited the Mathrubhoomi old-age home near KR Pet along with his family, shared a meal with the elderly residents and personally shaved and bathed sick inmates. Speaking at the visit, Srinivas expressed concern over the growing trend of elderly parents being abandoned despite spending their lives caring for their children.

### Convoy chatter

A light but pointed exchange unfolded during Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's recent interaction with the media when journalists asked whether he would follow the Prime Minister's suggestion on reducing the size of official convoys.

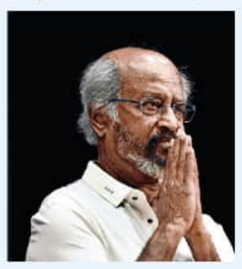
Responding with a touch of scepticism, Siddaramaiah said he would first examine whether such measures were being implemented uniformly in other states. The Chief Minister remarked that decisions taken individually tend to remain temporary and questioned the practicality of unilateral announcements. Referring indirectly to the Prime Minister's remarks, he said such matters should ideally be discussed collectively with all stakeholders before arriving at a common decision.

### Movie pitch

A routine media interaction took a cinematic turn when Labour Minister Santosh Lad asked journalists whether they had watched the film Dhurandhar. Drawing a comparison with real-life political scandals, the minister said filmmaker Aditya Dhar should consider making a movie on the Vyapam scam, calling it "a classical case" fit for the big screen. Lad urged journalists to study the alleged deaths linked to the scandal, referring to reports surrounding 27 deaths connected to the case. He said that the controversy had all elements of a gripping political thriller.

### Ego check

Rajinikanth recently claimed that he discovered one place where nobody cared that he was a superstar. Recalling a visit to the Art of Living Foundation international centre in Bengaluru during the organisation's anniversary celebrations, the actor said he had expected crowds, selfies and autograph seekers the moment he stepped out with Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. Instead, thousands around him remained completely unfazed. "Not one person even looked at me," Rajinikanth admitted with a laugh, saying the experience shattered his ego more than any political or professional encounter ever.



### Gold gospel

The Opposition found fresh ammunition last week after Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar mocked Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to cut down on gold purchases and petrol consumption. "What next — don't tie the mangalsutra, don't wear chains?" DKS quipped, wondering how weddings would survive without gold in a country where families buy jewellery "even if it means taking loans." He also took a swipe at past symbolic campaigns, asking whether lighting lamps and clapping during Covid had solved people's problems. And if sacrifice is truly the new national mantra, he suggested it should begin with BJP ministers, MLAs and officials swapping their cars for buses and trains before preaching austerity to everyone else.

### Paid fruit

At a mango–jackfruit fair in Bengaluru's Cubbon Park last week, former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda drew brief attention when a farmer offered him a jackfruit without charge. The farmer initially declined payment, but Gowda refused to take the fruit free and completed the purchase before moving on.

**–Sridhar Vivan**

### Bengaluru becomes first team to qualify; Punjab crash to 6th straight defeat

# Playoffs, here comes RCB

Punjab Kings (PBKS) skipper Shreyas Iyer admitted that PBKS lost the match during the powerplay after suffering early blows in their chase against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB).

The PBKS skipper credited RCB for their explosive batting display and praised the bowling efforts of Josh Hazlewood and Bhuvneshwar Kumar for tightening the game despite Punjab maintaining a strong scoring rate.

Defending a massive total of 222/4, RCB produced a disciplined bowling effort led by Rasikh Salam Dar, who claimed three wickets, to restrict Punjab Kings to 199/8 despite a fighting half-century from Shashank Singh. The victory helped RCB move to 18 points from 13 matches and secure a place in the playoffs.

Punjab Kings endured a disastrous start to the chase as Bhuvneshwar Kumar removed Priyansh Arya for a duck in the opening over. The experienced pacer struck again in his next over when Prabhsimran Singh edged a good-length delivery to first slip after scoring just two runs.

RCB tightened their grip further when impact substitute Rasikh Salam Dar dismissed Punjab Kings skipper Shreyas Iyer for one.

With wickets falling around him, Cooper Connolly launched a counterattack alongside Suryansh Shedge. Shedge took on Josh Hazlewood with a boundary and a six, while Connolly attacked Rasikh to help Punjab Kings recover to 49/3 at the end of the Power-play.

Connolly continued to play aggressively before Romario Shepherd provided the breakthrough in the eighth over. Attempting another big shot, Connolly was caught at deep square leg after scoring 37 off 22 balls, including three fours and three sixes.

Shedge then stitched together a useful partnership with Marcus Stoinis as the pair rebuilt the innings with regular boundaries and sensible strike rotation. However, RCB struck again when Virat Kohli completed a sharp catch at long-off to dismiss Shedge for 35 off 22 deliveries.

Punjab Kings still had hope with Stoinis at one end and Shashank Singh launching an aggressive assault at the other. Shashank changed the momentum of the chase by smashing three sixes in an over off Suyash Sharma before adding more boundaries to keep the required run rate under control.

Stoinis also shifted gears and struck consecutive boundaries against Rasikh as Punjab Kings reached 146/5 after 15 overs, needing 77 runs from the final five overs.

Shashank continued to fight hard and produced a stunning helicopter shot against Bhuvneshwar Kumar as the chase remained alive. However, Hazlewood delivered a crucial breakthrough in the 17th over by trapping Stoinis lbw for 37 off 25 balls.

Despite losing his partner, Shashank kept attacking and completed a rapid half-century in just 22 balls. But with little support from the other end, the required rate continued to climb.

RCB finally sealed the match in the final over when Rasikh dismissed Shashank, who was caught at long-on after a superb knock of 56 off 27 deliveries, featuring four boundaries and four sixes. Rasikh then picked up another wicket on the final ball as the Punjab Kings finished at 199/8.

Earlier, RCB posted 222/4 riding on an unbeaten 73 from Venkatesh Iyer and Virat Kohli's 58. Devdutt Padikkal also made an important contribution with a quickfire 45.

Asked to bat first, RCB managed only 17 runs in the first two overs as Kohli and Jacob Bethell took time to adjust to the conditions. Bethell struggled for timing and was eventually bowled by Harpreet Brar for 11 off seven balls.

Kohli continued to dominate and completed his fifty in just 31 deliveries. Venkatesh Iyer then took charge in the death overs. After a slow start, he accelerated brilliantly and completed his fifty off 29 balls. The left-hander remained unbeaten on 73 off 40 deliveries. —Agencies

Royal Challengers Bengaluru players celebrate their team's win in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 match against Punjab Kings at the HPCA Stadium in Dharamshala on Sunday

**Today's battle**
Chennai Super Kings
vs
Sunrisers Hyderabad
7.30 PM Chennai

RCB's Bhuvneshwar Kumar celebrates the wicket of Priyansh Arya

## Pleasing thing...: Venkatesh Iyer after match-winning 73

After winning the Player of the Match award, Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) all-rounder Venkatesh Iyer reflected on his match-winning, unbeaten 73 against Punjab Kings (PBKS), saying he was pleased to finally get a proper opportunity with the bat and make it count in his team's victory.

RCB became the first team in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 to qualify for the playoffs after defeating PBKS by 23 runs in a run fest at the HPCA Stadium here on Sunday.

Speaking during the post-match presentation, Venkatesh said he was happy to finally get a proper opportunity with the bat and contribute to the team's win.

"Today is the first time I got to properly bat. That was the pleasing thing, and getting two points of course," the all-rounder said.

Reflecting on his stint with RCB this season, the all-rounder praised the franchise's professional environment and coaching setup.

"They welcomed me very well. Obviously, it's a very professional setup. Credit to Mo (Bobat), Andy (Flower) and DK (Dinesh Karthik). The brand of cricket that RCB plays is something that excites me a lot," he said.

Venkatesh, who has previously played for Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), also spoke about his emotional connection with his former team while acknowledging his comfort in the current setup. "Obviously, I played for KKR so there is an emotional bond, but I really feel at home here," he added.

He admitted that limited opportunities had been frustrating, but said he understood the team combination decisions on the successful side. "I'll be lying if I said I wasn't frustrated because I wanted to play. But I do understand that this is a champion team and to tinker with the combination isn't always right," Venkaresh said. The all-rounder also credited Virat Kohli for helping him settle at the crease after a slow start.

"It was scratchy at the start, but I was lucky to be batting with Virat Kohli," he said. —ANI

# Parag, Jurel shine but Starc's fiery spell swings momentum for Delhi

Needing a win to stay afloat in the playoff race, Delhi Capitals clawed their way back into the contest through Mitchell Starc's incisive four-wicket burst after Rajasthan Royals threatened to post a massive total with a blazing top-order effort in their IPL match here on Sunday.

Asked to bat, Rajasthan looked set for a 220-plus score after racing to 160 for two in 14 overs, but Starc's superb spell of 4/40 triggered a dramatic collapse as the visitors eventually finished on 193 for eight. The visitors managed just 33 runs and lost six wickets to lose the plot.

Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal began brightly, driving and cutting fluently against Starc, but his stay was brief as Lungi Ngidi removed him for 12.

Teen sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi then lit up the innings with another fearless knock. The youngster mixed elegant stroke-play with mature defence and aggression, scoring at a rapid pace while taking on the Capitals attack with confidence.

Suryavanshi was handed a reprieve on 31 when Sameer Rizvi dropped him while running backwards off Tripurana Vijay, and the left-hander continued to attack before eventually falling for 46.

Playing only his second IPL game, Madhav Tiwari provided the breakthrough as Suryavanshi failed to clear the ropes while attempting a lofted hit straight down the ground.

At the other end, Dhruv Jurel (53) played the perfect supporting role before accelerating smoothly. Skipper Riyan Parag (51) continued the assault.

Just when Rajasthan seemed poised for a daunting finish, Starc swung the momentum decisively. The Australian left-arm quick dismissed the rampaging Parag to provide Delhi a desperately-needed breakthrough.

Starc then struck again immediately, removing Donovan Ferreira for a golden duck, and followed it up a ball later by trapping Ravi Singh leg-before as Rajasthan suddenly slipped to 161 for six. Madhav joined the party, dismissing Shubham for five as Rajasthan lost four wickets in the space of 15 deliveries and the flow of runs dried up considerably. Despite the collapse around him, Jurel stayed composed to complete a well-crafted half-century, anchoring the innings till the final overs. —PTI

Delhi Capitals' Mitchell Starc, centre, and teammates celebrate a wicket during their match against Rajasthan Royals, in New Delhi

# No drinking water worries till June, assures govt

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

but warned that a delayed monsoon could lead to difficulties.

Officials say the situation could worsen significantly if Kodagu, Wayanad and Hassan regions fail to receive substantial rainfall in the coming weeks, as the Cauvery, Hemavathi and Lakshmanatheertha rivers feeding KRS originate from these rain-dependent catchments. What particularly alarms authorities is the sharp imbalance between inflow and outflow.

While only 94 cusecs of water is entering the reservoir, the current outflow stands at 3,743 cusecs to sustain drinking water supply and protect standing crops in canal-irrigated regions.

The KRS reservoir, which has a total storage capacity of 49.452 TMC, currently holds only 15.127 TMC of water.

Of this, officials say only 6.748 TMC remains usable for agricultural purposes. The rest is either reserved for drinking water needs or classified as dead storage.

According to officials, nearly 4.4 TMC below the lower levels cannot be practically utilised, while another 3.979 TMC has been earmarked exclusively for drinking water supply to Mandya, Mysuru, Ramanagara and Bengaluru.

Authorities estimate that Karnataka requires nearly 2 TMC of water every month purely for drinking purposes. Under existing operational norms, irrigation release for crops is usually halted once KRS falls to 77 feet.

Beyond that point, only limited water remains available before the reservoir enters dead-storage territory below 60 feet.

The stress is not limited to KRS alone. The Harangi reservoir in Kodagu has dropped to 2,823.56 feet against its full level of 2,859 feet and currently holds just 2.241 TMC of water. Meanwhile, the Hemavathi reservoir at Gorur in Hassan district has fallen to 2,893.23 feet against a maximum of 2,922 feet. Officials say even these supporting reservoirs are witnessing weak inflows, reducing the possibility of emergency releases into KRS if the dry spell continues.

In contrast, reservoirs in the Krishna basin are in a relatively better position. Across the state's 14 major dams, water storage stands at around 36 to 38 per cent of total capacity, nearly 14 per cent lower than last year.

# K'taka farmers take to solar agricultural pumps

Karnataka has installed 5,533 off-grid standalone solar agricultural pumps under the Central government's PM-KUSUM scheme since its launch in 2019, according to data tabled in the Rajya Sabha by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

The scheme aims to promote solar-powered irrigation systems for farmers and reduce dependence on diesel and grid electricity in agriculture. Under Component-B of the programme, installation of 14 lakh standalone solar pumps are provided to farmers for irrigation purposes.

At the national level, 10,26,282 solar pumps have been installed across states as of February 28, 2026, with Karnataka contributing a relatively small share compared to several larger agrarian states.

Maharashtra leads the country with over 5 lakh installations across two implementing agencies.

Among southern states, Karnataka's 5,533 installations are marginally higher than Tamil Nadu's 5,176 pumps, while Kerala has reported only 8 installations under the scheme. This places Karnataka in the category of states with moderate adoption levels, despite its strong agricultural base in several regions.

An expert from the energy field pointed out, "Karnataka's numbers appear modest because implementation depends heavily on how aggressively the state government pushes the scheme at the district level. Awareness among farmers, upfront contribution costs, delays in approvals, groundwater concerns in certain regions, and dependence on monsoon-based agriculture can all influence adoption."

"While initially we saw many farmers being enthusiastic about it and asking how can they get it done, we don't see that happening now. Initially they didn't know who to reach out to as well. Limitations in distribution networks can also alow implementation timelines," said a resident of Kothanur.

—Iffath Fathima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JUNE: 27, 30* 29, JULY: 1, 2*, 4*
PURI KONARK BHUVANESHWAR 6 DAYS: JUNE: 16, 23
KASHI GAYA PRAYAG/HARIDWAR* 07/12* DAYS
MAY: 25, JUNE:24
GUJARATH RAJASTHAN 12/16* AUG: 30, SEPT: 1, 14*, 21* SEPT: 6,13, 14*, 21*
LEH LADAKH 8/6* DAYS: JUNE: 20, 22*
OOTY KODAIKANAL/ COASTAL KARNATAKA* 5/4* DAYS MAY: 24, 27*
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# Onus to provide humane work conditions lies on delivery platforms

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

KAUSHIK JN

According to Dr Vikram Arunachalam, Senior Psychiatrist, District Mental Health Programme (DMHP), GBA, the psychological impact of constant monitoring and work pressure gradually builds over time.

"Delivery workers today are constantly monitored through ratings, deadlines, penalties and tracking systems. This can create a feeling of being under watch all the time, which increases stress levels continuously. Over time, this pressure can lead to anxiety, poor sleep, irritability, mental exhaustion and burnout because the mind and body do not get enough time to recover," said Dr Arunachalam.

He said many workers gradually begin to normalise exhaustion and stress as part of the work culture, causing early warning signs to go unnoticed. Poor sleep, constant tiredness, irritability, headaches, emotional numbness, lack of motivation and withdrawing from family or friends are some of the symptoms commonly ignored until the condition becomes severe. He added that chronic stress and sleep deprivation can also affect concentration, memory, emotional control and decision-making ability, increasing the risk of accidents, frustration and unhealthy coping mechanisms.

He said that some workers can become dependent on alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, sleeping pills or energy drinks to cope with stress.

Bengaluru's District Mental Health Programme with urban mental health initiatives and Manochaitanya clinics provide free mental health consultations, counselling and psychiatric medication and are functioning across the five zones. Alongside this, the Tele-MANAS mental health toll free helpline 14416 is available for immediate psychological support and guidance.

Doctors share that most gig workers still struggle to access care because of irregular work schedules, stigma, lack of awareness and financial pressure.

"Delivery platforms must ensure humane working conditions, fair work expectations, regular rest breaks and access to mental health support. The mental health of delivery workers is an occupational health issue and cannot be ignored," he added.

Shedding light on the physical implications, Dr Deepak G Shivarathre, Director, Orthopaedics and Joint Replacement Surgery, Fortis Hospital, shares that prolonged riding under unfavourable conditions can have serious musculoskeletal and health complications.

"Delivery partners tend to develop chronic lower back pain, cervical spondylosis, neck stiffness, shoulder strain, wrist pain, knee problems and early joint wear and tear. Continuous exposure to vibration, potholes and sitting for long can place repetitive stress on the spine and surrounding muscles," said Dr Shivarathre.

He highlighted that repeated braking, bending, twisting, carrying heavy delivery bags may contribute to cervical disc issues, lower back strain, slipped discs, nerve complications, chronic inflammation and reduced mobility over time.

Due to exposure to heat, dehydration, pollution and irregular eating patterns, further health issues like gastritis, acidity, fatigue, muscle cramps, kidney related problems and reduced concentration are ignored on a regular basis.

"Ignoring early symptoms can convert manageable conditions into chronic musculoskeletal disorders, nerve related problems, severe spinal issues and long term disability. If neglected for years, conditions can progress to disc prolapse, severe arthritis, chronic pain syndromes, hypertension, burnout and can have cardiovascular complications linked to stress and exhaustion," he said.

According to Dr Shivarathre, delivery partners should undergo basic musculoskeletal assessments, posture analysis, blood pressure monitoring, blood sugar testing, vitamin D and B12 screening, kidney function tests and periodic spine or joint evaluations. Riders with chronic neck or back pain may require X ray or MRI scans depending on the severity.

The doctor highlights that delivery platforms should provide health insurance, ergonomic awareness programmes, hydration support and periodic medical check ups for riders. Initiatives should also be taken to encourage safe riding rather than speed.

**HEALTH TIP:** Excess sodium in salty snacks like chips, pretzels, or salted crackers, can trigger dehydration and raise blood pressure

Dark chocolate contains antioxidants and magnesium, which can actually help support brain and nerve health

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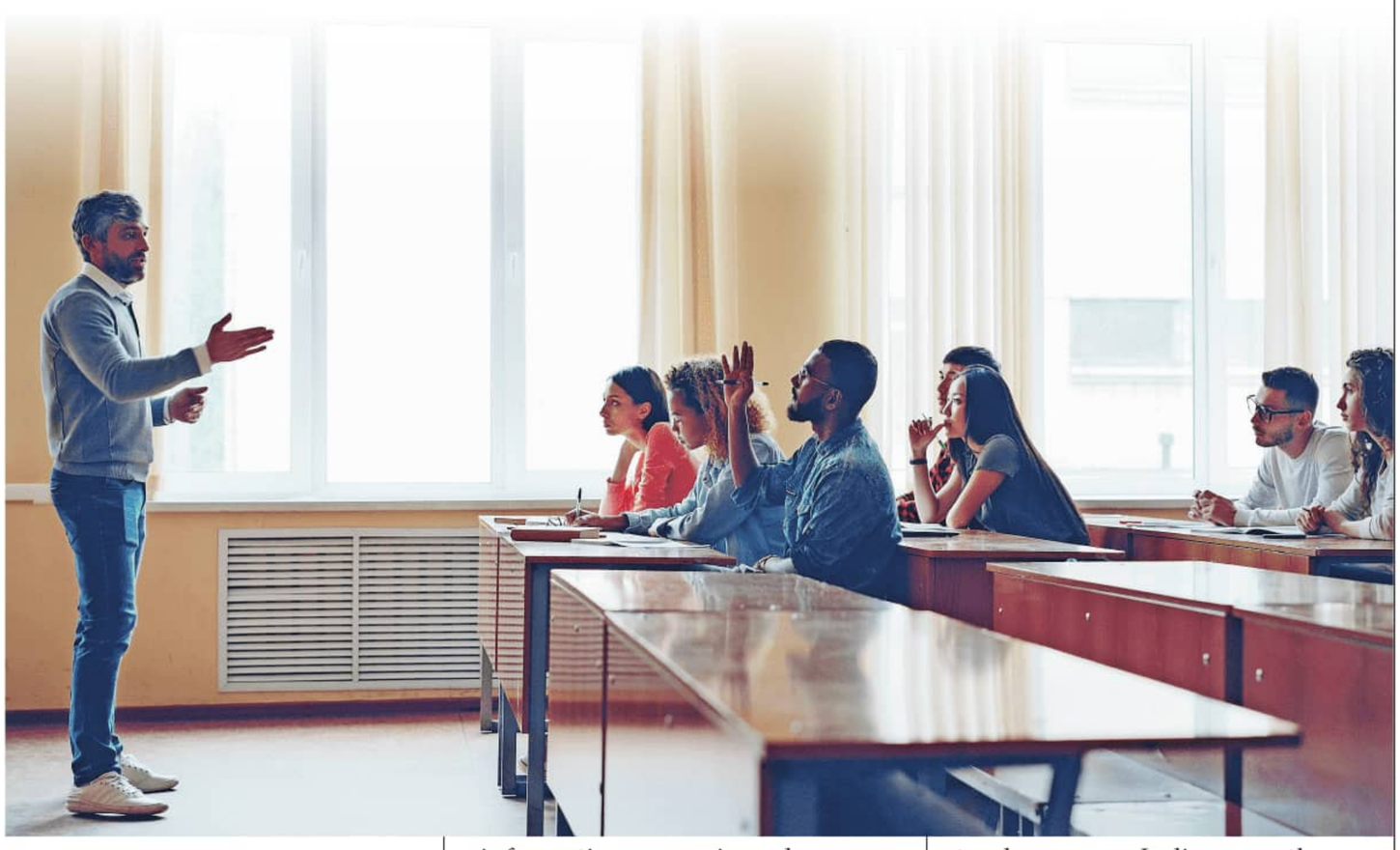
# TEACHING GEN Z: THE GREAT CLASSROOM SHIFT



**Teachers have to discuss rather than conduct a monologue, mentor and not just instruct to make classes engaging**

Today's students are able to verify a teacher's information within seconds, produce an essay in minutes using AI and sit in the classroom and learn how to calculate calculus from a YouTube video. But sometimes the teacher's job is more vital than ever. Faculty in schools and colleges talk about the new cultural change. Students are less docile and more restless than previous generations, are less tolerable of lengthy lectures, and are more likely to question authority. It's actually a reflection of a bigger shift that is being driven by technology, social media, the pandemic times of schooling and the rise of Generation Z.

Traditional Indian classroom was based on hierarchy. Students listened and teachers spoke. Silence, obedience, and distance were all often linked to respect. Today's students have been raised in a digital world where information comes in real-time, opinions are shared, and online authority is challenged. Engagement doesn't simply happen with the command.

This does not necessarily reflect a lower regard for teachers in Gen Z. Instead, it is an indication that younger students have a different idea of respect. Respect, for many students today, is associated with authenticity and competence, and with being accessible emotionally. They are more receptive to approachability than rigidity, discussion over monologue and mentorship rather than instruction.

Technology has helped speed up this change. The pandemic changed the dynamics of education forever -- pupils got used to independent learning, the use of recorded lessons and digital interactive learning platforms. In cities like Bengaluru, students are spending more time in the classroom, taking part in online tutorials, using artificial intelligence (AI) help, or coaching sessions in one day. The classroom is no longer the only source of knowledge; teachers are now part of a huge digital world and are in a struggle for attention.

This has grown exponentially with the introduction of AI. According to the survey conducted by the Centre for Teacher Accreditation (CENTA), involving more than 5,000 teachers across India, more than 70% of teachers were already using the AI tools with their students for lesson planning, assessments and engagement; over 50% of the higher education institutions in India have started implementing AI-related policies. The transformation presents opportunities as well as challenges.

Students today are better informed, more aware of the world and more technologically adept. They tend to be more assertive in their views on matters. If it's directed properly, that curiosity can enhance the learning environment. However, the digital age has also reduced attention spans. With the constant exposure to short form content, the traditional lecture-based teaching is less effective. Distracted classrooms with smart phones taking the place of the blackboard have become the norm in many schools. There is also academic dishonesty by students who create assignments using AI and who rely on online summaries for learning.

This shift from a traditional system can be disconcerting for those who have been schooled in traditional systems. People feel a loss of authority. But the solution is not to be found in "enforcing discipline" or romanticising the older models of classroom environments. Trying to reinstate the unquestionable hierarchy in a generation that has grown up in a digital open space will probably fail.

The teacher's role in an era when there is a lot of information is not just to impart facts, but to develop judgment. Students can find answers online but need guidance to assess the information they find critically, think ethically and to understand context. AI can come up with answers, but it can't be a replacement for empathy, mentorship or human encouragement.

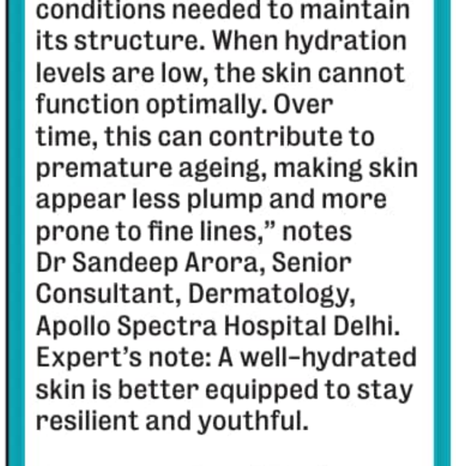
Today's best classrooms are those that have a mix of discipline and conversation. Those teachers, who encourage participation, connect lessons to the here and now and provide opportunities for questions are able to maintain attention more effectively than teachers who rely on authority alone. It is not about discarding structure, standards. Instead, it's about acknowledging and understanding that connection and relevance are now the foundation for engagement and respect.

But, the Indian education system still faces this transition. Too often the emphasis on testing, packed classrooms and a stifling of institutional environments make it impossible to have any real interaction. Teachers experience tremendous pressure as they try to balance their administrative duties, performance evaluation and the expectations of parents. The debate around educational reform can be about the technology infrastructure or about teaching and learning outcomes, with little attention paid to the human relationship that is the essence of learning.

This is a relationship that is more important than ever. Students are in desperate need for mentors as well as teachers in an age of anxiety, digital overload, and social isolation. Preserving the human element in increasingly digital learning environments is not a challenge to be overcome or another "solution" to be applied in Indian education, but a reality.

Generation Z has transformed the classroom — but not necessarily in a bad way. The challenge for teachers is not to regain the unquestioned authority to teach, but to change their approach to teaching in a way that shows a blend of knowledge, empathy, discipline, and dialogue, as well as instruction and mentorship.

*By **Dr Anuradha PS**, Professor, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) and **Dr Divyashree**, Professor, Alliance University*




## All you need to know about...

*Hydration for skin*

**Why hydration matters for skin**

Collagen, the protein responsible for skin firmness, depends on a healthy internal environment. "While water does not directly create collagen, it supports the conditions needed to maintain its structure. When hydration levels are low, the skin cannot function optimally. Over time, this can contribute to premature ageing, making skin appear less plump and more prone to fine lines," notes Dr Sandeep Arora, Senior Consultant, Dermatology, Apollo Spectra Hospital Delhi.
Expert's note: A well-hydrated skin is better equipped to stay resilient and youthful.

**More than just drinking water**

While drinking water is essential, hydration is also influenced by everyday lifestyle choices. "Excessive caffeine and high sugar intake can dehydrate the body, while extreme weather conditions both hot and cold can affect the skin's moisture levels. Incorporating water-rich foods such as fruits and vegetables into your diet can help improve overall hydration," he adds.
Expert's note: It's about building a balanced routine that supports your body from within.

**Small habits, big difference**

Improving hydration doesn't require drastic changes. Simple, consistent habits can go a long way. "Sipping water regularly throughout the day helps the body absorb it more efficiently than consuming large amounts at once. Paying attention to signs like skin dryness or tightness can also serve as a reminder to increase your intake," says the expert.
Expert's note: Over time, these small shifts can lead to noticeable improvements in skin texture and overall health.

**It starts within**

Skincare products can enhance the surface, but hydration is one of the simplest yet most effective ways to support your skin's natural functions. —Femina

MIRRORLIGHTS

## FAQs on genuine secure attachment style

**What is a secure attachment style in a relationship?**
A. It is a healthy attachment style marked by trust, honesty, consistency and emotional stability.

**How do I know if my partner is securely attached?**
They usually communicate clearly, respect boundaries, stay consistent and handle conflict maturely.

**Can a new relationship show signs of secure attachment early on?**
Yes, secure attachment often appears early through calm, clear and dependable behavior.

**Why does secure attachment matter in dating?**
It helps create emotional safety, trust, and a more stable and supportive relationship.

**Is consistency a sign of secure attachment?**
Yes, consistency is one of the strongest signs of a genuinely secure attachment style. —Femina

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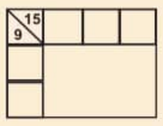
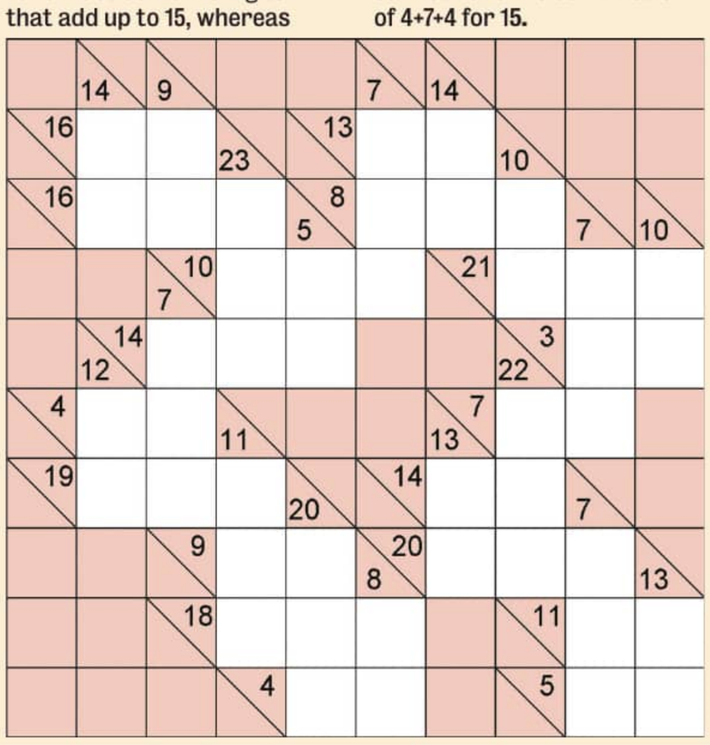
## Kakuro

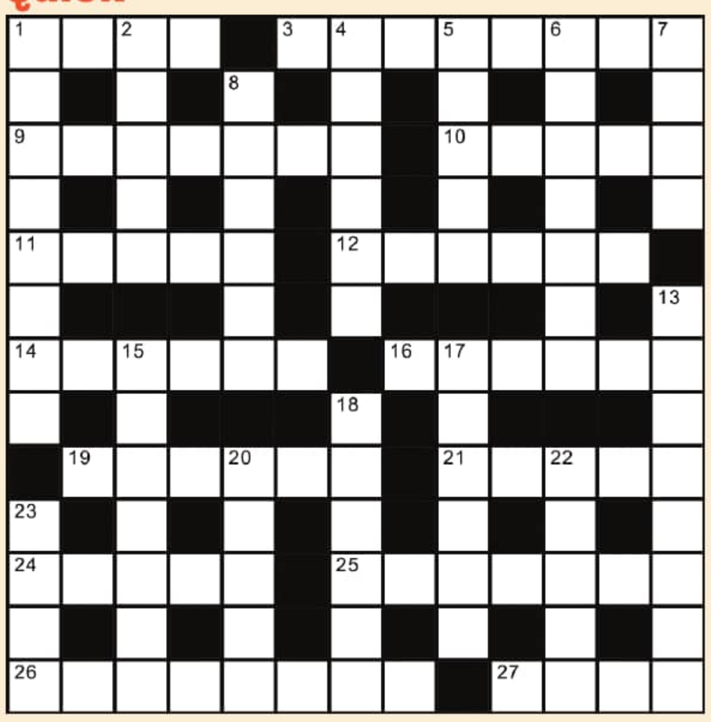
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



## Quick



**ACROSS**

1 Mafia bigwigs (4)
3 Tapering pillars (8)
9 The negative electrode (7)
10 Destiny, fate (5)
11 Old fashioned name–"re-ban" anagram? (5)
12 Pulled or tugged sharply (6)
14 Concealed, veiled or disguised (6)
16 Cuisine which is a fusion of Kodava and Mangalorean (6)
19 Throw liquid about (6)
21 Deadly African virus (5)
24 Looped rope (5)
25 Diabolic (7)
26 Without much difficulty or efforts (4,4)
27 ___ a hand : help ? (4)

**DOWN**

1 Holds forth; makes a speech (8)
2 Off, almost impossible (3,2)
4 Cheerio (3-3)
5 Compare (5)
6 Operating specialist (7)
7 Assassinate (4)
8 Rough or vulgar (6)
13 Forward-looking or ahead (8)
15 Back (7)
17 Zend ___ : Zoroastrian holy book (6)
18 Pursues or follows (6)
20 A Eurasian tree, the white poplar (5)
22 Unit of weight (5)
23 Be aware of (4)

## Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

**Today's CLUE: I EQUALS G**

XDXTG SXP CXIZSSZSI JUOXQ MTUO QUOX UARXT CXIZSSZSI'Q XSN.

## Linemaro

Can I be the water in your bath tub?

## Mindchow

Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves

## Joke of the day

Dressing a baby is like putting an octopus into a string bag, making sure none of the arms hang out

## Loop

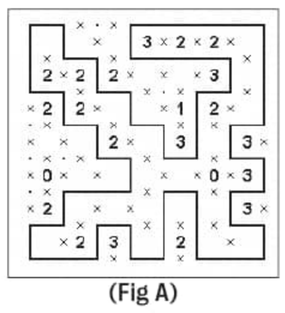
### Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

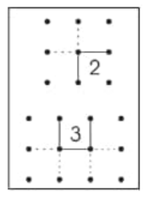
### How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

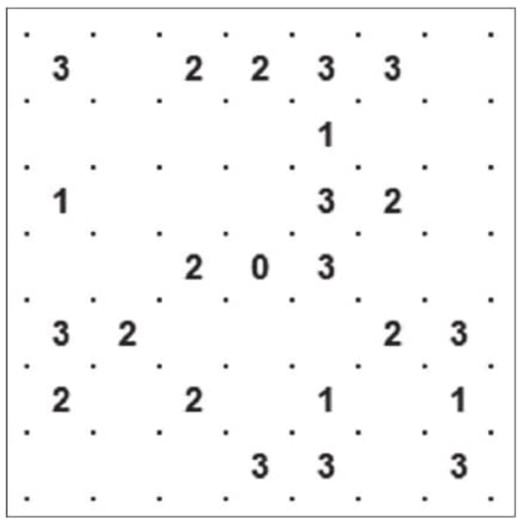
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



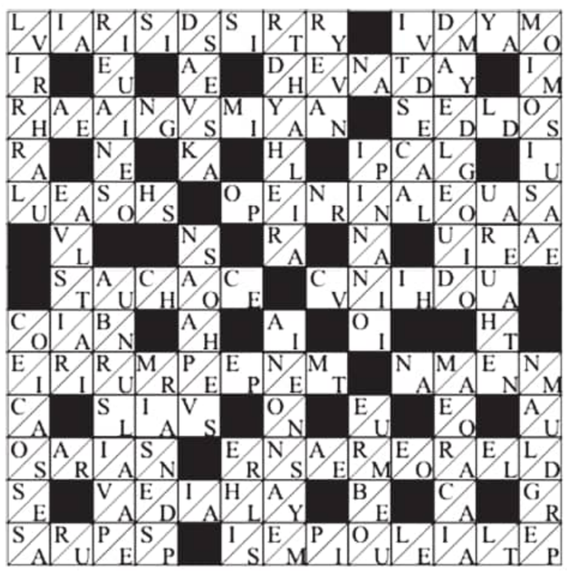
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



## Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

## Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 C | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | | | | |
| 7 | | | | |
| 8 | | | | |
| 9 | | | | |

**ACROSS**

1 Scrub; 6 Later; 7 Ore he; 8 Melia (1-4); 9 Bleat

**DOWN**

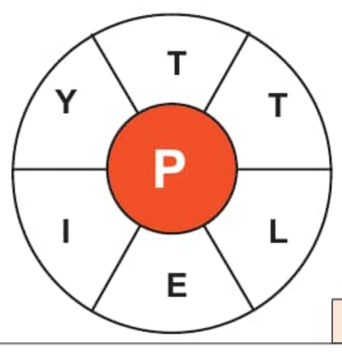
1 Cater; 2 A mule; 3 Haber; 4 Lib or; 5 Steel

## Mensapuzzle

Which number would logically complete this grid?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 3 | 4 | 11 |
| 5 | 17 | 18 | 3 |
| 3 | 16 | 21 | 8 |
| 4 | 9 | 6 | |

## Bull's eye




How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

05 Average; 06 Good; 08 Outstanding

## SudokuChallenge

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 4 | 8 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 3 | 2 | |
| 5 | 6 | | 3 | 4 | | 7 | | 8 |
| 2 | 5 | | 9 | | | | | |
| | | 3 | 2 | | 7 | 4 | | |
| | | | | | 5 | | 8 | 9 |
| 8 | | 7 | | 6 | 3 | | 4 | 2 |
| | 3 | 4 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 8 | 6 | |

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

## Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

**Easy** = 13

4 7 7 5

**Medium** = 5

3 3 4 3

**Hard** = 8

2 9 9 8

## Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

**Differences:** 1. Sleeve is longer. 2. Name tag is missing. 3. Counter is wider. 4. Portion of collar is missing. 5. Elbow patch is added. 6. Nose is smaller.

## Riddler

My father gave me a brain teaser with two groups of words missing. The four words in each group are anagrams of each other. I've solved the first group, but I'm stuck on the second group. Can you help? Time to decorate the Christmas tree! Putting up the lights was my job, but after that it was time to ENLIST some help. While the kids were busy adding TINSEL, I put on some music to LISTEN to; my favourite song is "SILENT Night". After we finished decorating the Christmas tree, I hung the stockings on the __1__. Feeling a chill, I looked down and had to __2__ my __3__ lapse; the fire was out. I threw on my __4__ and stepped out into the cold night to gather some firewood. Upon my return, we were soon roasting chestnuts and sipping eggnog to complete a wonderful evening.

## Alpha triangle

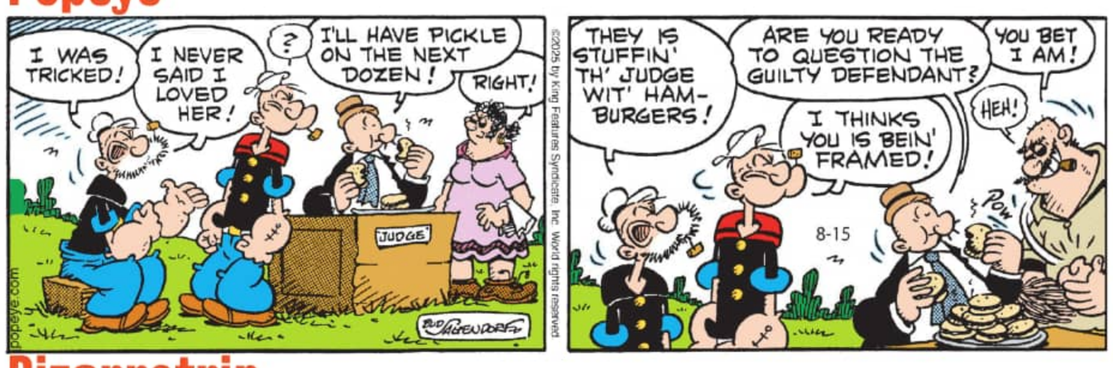
1 Sulphur symbol
2 _ easy _ a pie
3 Posed
4 Mother of Luv and Kush
5 East German secret police
6 Give a hand
7 Paul McCartney or Flea?

Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.


DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

# COMICS

## Popeye




## Bizarrotrip

Wayno & Piraro 2-4-26
You may think it sounds intelligent, but when you say "upon reflection," it doesn't ring true.
BIZARRO.COM
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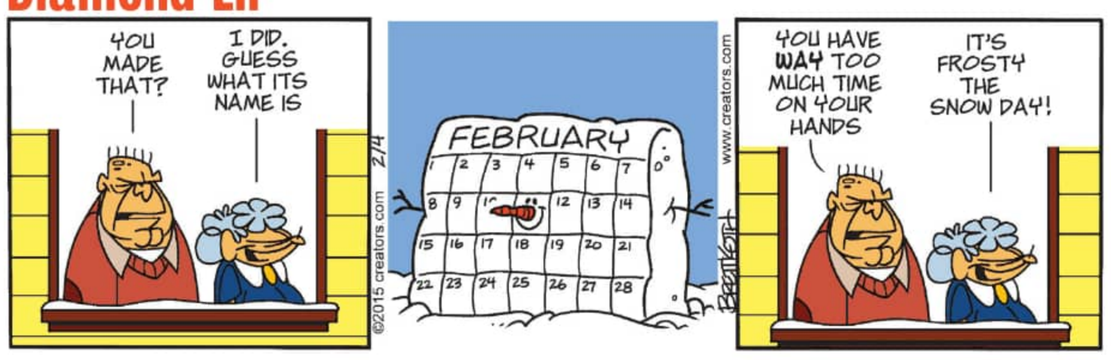
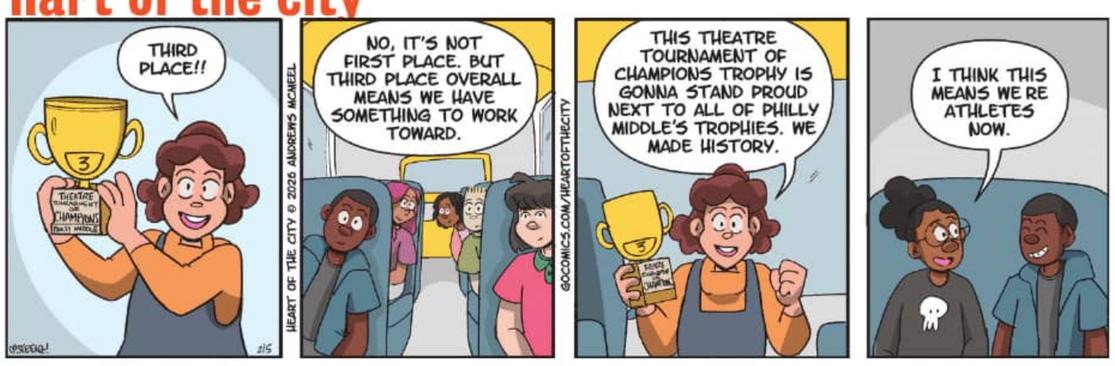
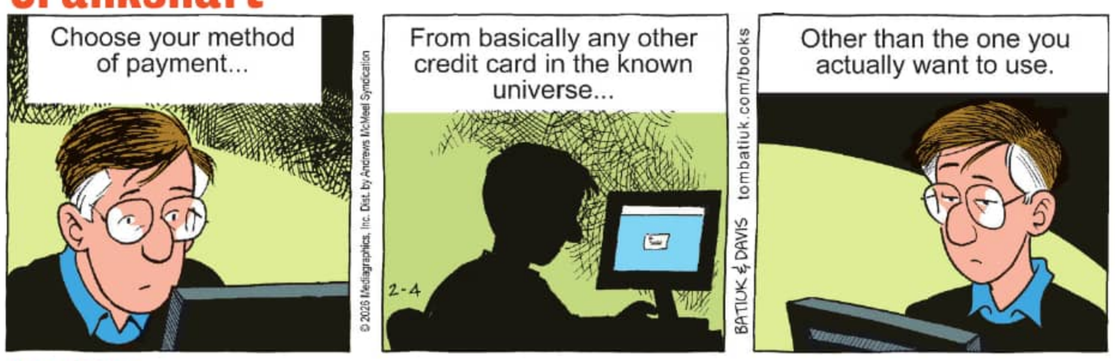
## Diamond Lil




## Hart of the city


THIRD PLACE!!
NO, IT'S NOT FIRST PLACE. BUT THIRD PLACE OVERALL MEANS WE HAVE SOMETHING TO WORK TOWARD.
THIS THEATRE TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS TROPHY IS GONNA STAND PROUD NEXT TO ALL OF PHILLY MIDDLE'S TROPHIES. WE MADE HISTORY.
I THINK THIS MEANS WE RE ATHLETES NOW.
HEART OF THE CITY © 2026 ANDREWS MCMEEL
@COMICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY

## Crankshaft


Choose your method of payment...
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2-4
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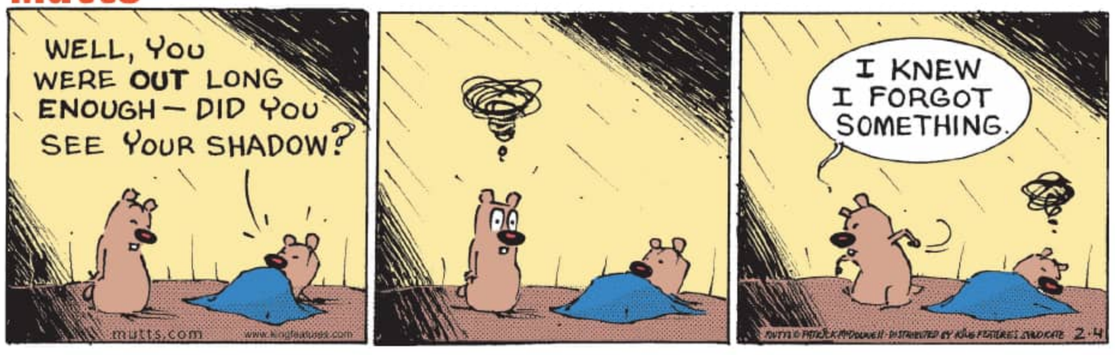
BATIUK & DAVIS tombatiuk.com/books

## Mutts




# WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR

## If it's your birthday today

Creative problem-solving is your key to success this year. You will find innovative ways to overcome obstacles that have previously stopped you. A project involving home or family takes a positive turn in August. Your ability to see the "big picture" helps you navigate small daily stresses. Keep your sense of humor close; it is your best survival tool.

**Aries** Mar 21 – Apr 20

Bold energy fuels your morning, pushing you toward a risky but rewarding professional choice. Trust your instincts today; the universe rewards those who dare to step into the unknown career light.

**Taurus** Apr 21 – May 20

Ground yourself in nature to soothe a restless spirit. The earth offers stability when the world feels chaotic. A walk through a park provides the mental reset you desperately need.

**Gemini** May 21 – Jun 21

A flurry of messages brings exciting news regarding a social event. Stay organized to avoid missing a key detail. Your wit is your greatest asset in a fast-paced afternoon meeting.

**Cancer** Jun 22 – July 23

Focus on your inner sanctuary today. Reorganizing a corner of your home brings unexpected peace. A quiet evening spent reflecting on your emotional growth helps you prepare for upcoming changes.

**Leo** Jul 24 – Aug 23

Your natural charisma shines brightly, drawing influential people toward your orbit. Use this spotlight to advocate for a project you love. Success is inevitable when you lead with pure heart.

**Virgo** Aug 24 – Sep 23

Precision is required for a complex task at work. Double-check your data before submitting anything final. Your dedication to excellence sets you apart from your peers in a significant way.

**Libra** Sep 24 – Oct 22

Harmony in relationships is easily achieved today. Reach out to someone you have missed lately. A simple gesture of kindness ripples outward, creating a beautiful atmosphere of mutual respect and love.

**Scorpio** Oct 23 – Nov 22

Intensity marks your professional interactions. Channel this focus into solving a long-standing problem. Your ability to see beneath the surface allows you to uncover a truth others have completely missed.

**Sagittarius** Nov 23 – Dec 22

Adventure calls, even if it is just exploring a new neighbourhood. Break your routine to invite fresh inspiration. A chance encounter with a stranger sparks a brilliant idea for travel.

**Capricorn** Dec 23 – Jan 20

Financial planning takes priority today. Review your long-term goals and make necessary adjustments. Discipline now leads to freedom later. You possess the grit required to build a very lasting legacy.

**Aquarius** Jan 21 – Feb 19

Collaborative efforts flourish when you share your unique perspective. Don't be afraid to challenge the status quo. Your innovative thinking paves the way for a breakthrough that benefits the entire group.

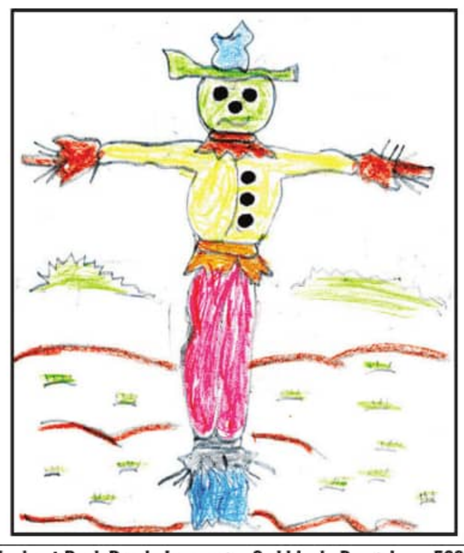
**Pisces** Feb 20 – Mar 20

Trust your intuition regarding a domestic matter. A soft approach works better than a confrontation. Quiet meditation reveals the answers you seek. Listen to the whispers of your soul today.

www.sundeepkochar.com

# KIDZONE

Namratha, Bengaluru



Akhilesh, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

# SOLUTIONS

**SOLVE IN 1M**

(6/6 / 5√6) – (1/5)
(6/5) – (1/5)
5/5 = 1

**BULL'S EYE**

pelt, PETTILY, pettly, pletly, pile, pitly, type, yelp

**STRIKE OUT**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| V | I | R | I | D | I | T | Y | ■ | I | M | A | M | ■ | ■ |
| I | ■ | U | ■ | E | ■ | H | E | A | D | Y | ■ | I | ■ | ■ |
| A | ■ | N | ■ | K | ■ | L | ■ | P | A | L | ■ | U | ■ | ■ |
| R | E | I | N | S | M | A | N | ■ | E | E | L | S | ■ | ■ |
| I | ■ | U | ■ | E | ■ | H | E | A | D | Y | ■ | I | ■ | ■ |
| V | I | R | I | D | I | T | Y | ■ | I | M | A | M | ■ | ■ |

**FAST FIVE**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | U | R | B | S |
| A | L | E | R | T |
| R | E | H | O | E |
| E | M | A | I | L |
| T | A | B | L | E |

**RIDDLER**

1. mantel, 2. lament, 3. mental & 4. mantle

**QUICK**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| W | I | T | H | E | A | S | E | ■ | L | E | N | D | ■ | ■ |
| O | ■ | R | ■ | L | ■ | E | ■ | A | ■ | C | ■ | E | ■ | ■ |
| K | ■ | P | ■ | B | ■ | A | ■ | S | ■ | U | ■ | N | ■ | ■ |
| S | P | L | A | S | H | ■ | E | B | O | L | A | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| ■ | ■ | U | ■ | ■ | ■ | C | ■ | ■ | ■ | V | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| M | A | S | K | E | D | ■ | M | A | L | N | A | D | ■ | ■ |
| I | ■ | S | ■ | ■ | ■ | E | ■ | O | ■ | ■ | ■ | A | ■ | ■ |
| A | B | N | E | R | ■ | Y | A | N | K | E | D | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| L | ■ | O | ■ | A | ■ | B | ■ | E | ■ | G | ■ | Y | ■ | ■ |
| C | A | T | H | O | D | E | ■ | K | A | R | M | A | ■ | ■ |
| E | ■ | O | ■ | C | ■ | Y | ■ | I | ■ | U | ■ | L | ■ | ■ |
| D | O | N | S | O | B | E | L | I | S | K | S | ■ | ■ | ■ |

**MENSA PUZZLE**

7. Splitting the diagram into four smaller squares the value in the box towards the centre equals the sum of the other three numbers.

**QUOTE UNCODE**

Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end.

**SUDOKU**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 5 |
| 7 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 8 |
| 2 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 7 |
| 9 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 9 |
| 8 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| 6 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 1 |
| 1 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 3 |

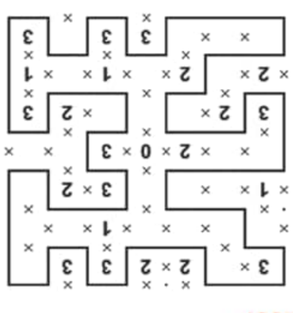
**ALPHA TRIANGLE**

S, As, Sat, Sita, Stasi, Assist, Bassist.

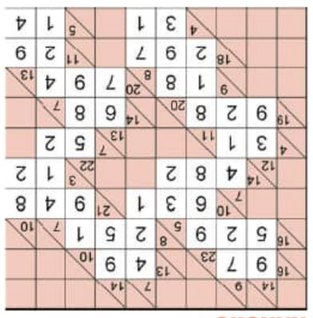
**GO FIGURE**

Easy
7 – 5 + 7 + 4 = 13
Medium
3 – 4 + 3 + 3 = 5
Hard
9 – 2 + 9 – 8 = 8

**LOOP**



**KAKURO**



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# JUST FOR FUN

## Kalki has played several intense roles, but says she enjoys playing breezy characters as well

Actor Kalki Koechlin recently looked back at one of her most loved performances, Aditi from 'Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani', while opening up about the kind of characters she has often been offered throughout her career. The actress, known for choosing unconventional roles, shared that positive and cheerful characters still hold a special place in her heart.

During a recent interaction with Variety India, Kalki was asked whether she would revisit characters from films like 'Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani' if they were remade today. Kalki admitted that she no longer sees herself returning to those parts at this stage of her life. However, the actress acknowledged that her character Aditi remains one of the most loved roles from her filmography. Unlike several intense or emotionally heavy parts she has portrayed over the years, Aditi represented warmth, positivity and emotional comfort.

According to the actress, many viewers often approach her with comments about how convincingly she portrays difficult personalities on screen. "I have had so many people walk up to me and say, 'oh, you play a bitch so well!'" she revealed with a laugh.

**"Strong reactions to characters can also mean it evokes emotions"**

The actress explained that while such reactions can sometimes feel overwhelming, they also indicate that the performance connected with the audience emotionally. "Audiences have strong reactions to these characters, which can sometimes be flustering or disturbing, but it also means the character was convincing and evoked emotions in people," she shared.

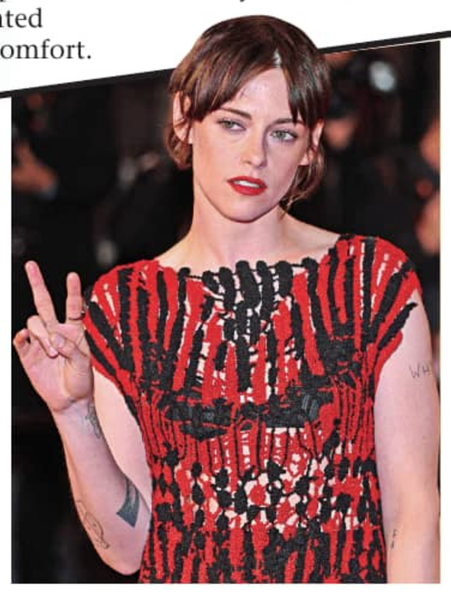
Even though Kalki enjoys exploring emotionally complex characters, she admitted that she genuinely enjoys portraying lighter and happier personalities whenever she gets the chance.

Kalki Koechlin has stepped into French-language cinema with John M Keller's comedy-drama 'Her Song'. —ETimes

## Kristen Stewart is sick of Hollywood studio system

Actor Kristen Stewart has delivered a sharp critique of Hollywood's studio system while promoting her new Cannes Film Festival title 'Full Phil', calling for more artistic freedom and "less making billionaires more f*&^%ing billionaires". Ahead of the film's Midnight Screenings premiere at Cannes, Stewart discussed her admiration for French filmmaker Quentin Dupieux, her long-awaited collaboration with Woody Harrelson and her growing frustration with the way films are financed and produced in the United States.

Stewart said she agreed to star in 'Full Phil' even before reading the screenplay because of her respect for Dupieux's filmmaking style. "I love his movies. They just don't look or feel like anyone else's, and those are the types of directors that actors are so lucky to be able to follow," Stewart said in an interview with Variety.



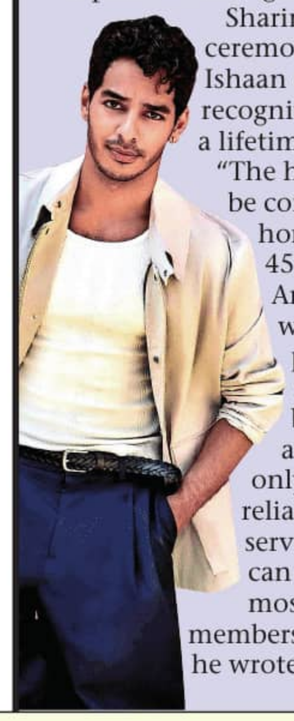
The actor also spoke warmly about sharing screen space with Harrelson after years of trying to collaborate. "We've been trying to work together for years, and it just never lined up," she said. —ANI

## In the cavalry

Actor Ishaan Khatter has been conferred with an honorary membership of the 45 Cavalry of the Indian Armoured Corps for his portrayal of a 45 Cavalry officer in 'Pippa' and his respect for the regiment's ethos.

Sharing moments from the ceremony on social media, Ishaan described the recognition as "the honour of a lifetime."

"The honour of a lifetime to be conferred upon an honorary membership of 45 Cavalry of the Indian Armoured Corps - which I may now proudly call my regiment! There is no bigger acknowledgment and I only hope to always be reliably and humbly in service in any which way I can be to the bravest and most honourable members of the Indian army," he wrote. —ANI



## Hot cuppa

Actor Pooja Hegde on Sunday shared a behind-the-scenes glimpse from the shoot location of her upcoming romantic drama tentatively titled '#DQ41', co-starring Dulquer Salmaan.

Taking to Instagram Stories, the actress posted a serene photograph featuring a mist-covered mountain landscape during what appeared to be an early morning shoot schedule.

In the image, Hegde is seen holding a black travel tumbler against a backdrop of lush green hills covered in fog and low-hanging clouds.

Adding a personal touch to the update, the actor thanked her co-star Dulquer Salmaan for the beverage, writing, "Morning coffee courtesy @dqsalmaan".

She further captioned the scenic post with, "The views are complementary," referring to the picturesque surroundings.

While the exact filming location has not been disclosed, the visuals suggest the team is currently shooting in a hillside region surrounded by greenery and misty mountains.

Apart from the Dulquer Salmaan-starrer, the actress will also appear in 'Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai'. —ANI

SANDALWOOD SHOTS
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## Bail first look out

Karunada Chakravarthy Dr Shiva Rajkumar, affectionately known as Shivanna, will be seen in a striking new avatar in Bail. The makers unveil his first look from the much-anticipated project backed by KVN Productions.

Director Pavan Wadeyar, known for experimenting with the looks of leading superstars, has opted for a distinctive salt-and-pepper style for Shivanna. The transformation adds depth and intrigue to his character.

The first look of Bail features Dr Shiva Rajkumar in a blend of playfulness and mystery. Adding impact to the reveal is a powerful voiceover by dialogue king Saikumar.

The makers launched the teaser earlier on Saturday, and it received an overwhelming response. The teaser was also screened during a concert by music composer Ajaneesh Loknath, who serves as the music director for Bail.

Bail boasts a strong technical team with Vaidy as the Director of Photography, Guna as the Production Designer, and Shashank Narayana as the editor.

Bail is all set to hit theatres this Varamahalakshmi festival season.

## Suni's latest

Simple Suni is one of the directors in Sandalwood who comes out with new movies quietly. His latest movie Moda Kavida Vaathaavarana has received a UA certificate from the Censor Board and is scheduled to arrive in theaters on June 26 across the state.

"I assure the audiences that they will get a breezy feel while watching Moda Kavida Vaathaavarana at theaters. The movie is aimed at Generation Z and Generation Alpha audiences. The movie was filmed at beautiful locations in and around Moodbidri. I am very happy with the performance of the lead pair," said Suni.

The director said he was very happy that the Censor Board did not recommend any cuts.

Sheelam, who has played small character roles in a few Kannada movies, debuts as a hero with this movie. Satvika and Moksha Kushal are paired opposite Sheelam. The movie is supported by Mysore Ramesh, Srirangaraju, Lokesh Belavadi, and Goa Ramesh under the Ram Movies banner.

The songs – Nannedeya Haadu, sung by Sanjit Hegde, and Yayaati sung by Sangeetha – have become popular.